



REGISTERED  
APPRENTICESHIP  
*Earn. Learn. Succeed.*

## Grant's Mechanical, Inc. – Fargo, North Dakota Cultivating a Trained Workforce

In March of 2004, Karen L. applied for a sheet metal working apprenticeship with Grant's Mechanical, Inc., in Fargo, N.D. Up to that point Karen had been living paycheck to paycheck, working a string of minimum-wage jobs. When she applied for the apprenticeship, she did not know much about metal working, but she did know that it represented an opportunity to learn a new skill while continuing to earn a paycheck.

"The thing that frustrated me most about that time in my life was that I wasn't going anywhere – I wasn't learning anything," said Karen. "I knew I was capable of more."

Grant's Mechanical was founded in 1975 by Grant Johnson, Professional Engineer. After 10 years in operation, Grant's Mechanical sponsored its first apprenticeship program to recruit and retain educated and highly skilled sheet metal workers. Over the past 20 years, the company has added four additional apprenticeship programs: electrical, HVAC, pipefitting and plumbing.



"Registered Apprenticeship has exceeded our expectations," said Don Puetz, apprenticeship director for Grant's Mechanical. "Our workforce is better trained in a wider variety of skills. Our customers tell us time and again that our employees are good at what they do, and that they are a pleasure to work with."



In just over 20 years, Grant's Mechanical has sponsored more than 200 apprentices. With a current workforce of 80, the company also has 33 active apprentices.

Karen graduated from the Grant's Mechanical Registered Apprenticeship program in September of 2008. Before Karen started her apprenticeship, she was making \$6 per hour. Her wage increased to \$12.30 when she became an apprentice. Karen now makes more than \$21 per hour as a full-time sheet metal worker – and she is not stopping there.

"My goal is to become the first female, Native American foreman at Grant's Mechanical," said Karen. "I know it's a big job with a lot of responsibility, but I know I can handle it. Apprenticeship taught me everything about this industry, starting with the basics. I want to keep building on that."

